

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

Husain Al-Musallam  
President  
Fédération Internationale de Natation  
Chemin de Bellevue 24a/24b  
CH - 1005 Lausanne  
Switzerland

Dear Husain Al-Musallam,

We write to you to express our concern with your rationale for rejecting the use of swim caps designed for natural Black hair in the upcoming Tokyo Olympics. It creates an unnecessary, exclusionary barrier to competitive swimming for underrepresented minorities, particularly people of African descent with Afro-textured or natural hairstyle. It is unfair and unequal. International Swimming Federation (FINA) described the caps designed to accommodate natural hair as unsuitable because they do not follow “the natural form of the head” and then justified the decision on the grounds that to their “best knowledge, the athletes competing at the international events never used, neither require to use, caps of such size and configuration.” Although the decision to reject swim caps for natural hair is now under review, FINA’s existing policies and statements are emblematic of the clear and persistent lack of diversity within the sport.

In a joint study conducted by the University of Memphis and University of Nevada-Las Vegas, 65 percent of African-American children would like to swim more than they do and 76 percent of parents reported that their children would be more likely to want to participate in swimming if they saw a talented swimmer that looked like them. FINA has a responsibility to act in accordance with its stated values of inclusivity and representation. Embracing swim caps that accommodate the natural state of afro-textured hair goes a long way in improving representation and shows aspiring Black swimmers that they too are welcomed in the sport.

Being more inclusive means understanding the barriers to participation in swimming that act as a deterrent to future generations of athletes. We respectfully request FINA to evaluate and report on the barriers to participation in swimming for communities of color and provide recommendations on how to improve participation rates for these demographics. Additionally, while reviewing your swim cap decision, we urge you to consider the impacts on diversity and representation in the sport. We look forward to further engagement with you and receiving a timely response.

Sincerely,



Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Karen Bass  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Joyce Beatty  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Eleanor Norton  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Marilyn Strickland  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Andre Carson  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Brenda Lawrence  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Stacey Plaskett  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Dwight Evans  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Bennie Thompson  
Member of Congress

/s/  
John Yarmuth  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Kweisi Mfume  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Bobby Rush  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Jahana Hayes  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Katherine Clark  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Donald M. Payne, Jr.  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Gwen Moore  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Hank Johnson  
Member of Congress